



**CATHOLIC EDUCATION**  
WILCANNIA-FORBES

***Faith, Learning and Transformation in Jesus Christ***

# **Guidelines and Procedures for Parish School Advisory Committees**

## **1. Bishop's Statement**

The parish schools of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes are Catholic communities that have at their core the person of Jesus Christ. Our schools are Catholic schools of excellence where each child is challenged to grow in knowledge, wisdom, faith and love in imitation of Jesus.

Pope Benedict addressed Catholic educators in 2008, saying, "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the good news. First and foremost, every Catholic institution is a place to encounter the Living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth." Catholic schools are at the very heart of the evangelising mission of the Church, proclaiming the Gospel to all - to the children who attend, their parents, and the surrounding community. Especially in today's world with its many obstacles to faith, such as secularism and materialism, we need strong Catholic schools allowing the Holy Spirit to strengthen children, families and staff.

Our parish schools are centres of excellence dedicated to educating the whole child - spiritually, academically, socially, physically and emotionally. Our leaders, teachers and staff commit to providing best practice in faith formation, teaching and learning, and pastoral care.

The Parish School Advisory Committee plays a vital role in advising the Parish Priest/Administrator and Principal to assist them in ensuring that our parish schools live up to their mission of providing this Christ-centred, quality education of the whole person. It is essential that parents, as the 'primary educators' of their children, have a strong role in advising and assisting the Parish Priest/Administrator and Principal to help the parish school achieve its mission. The Parish School Advisory Committee is an important way in which members of the parish exercise their 'common responsibility for the common mission shared by all members

through Baptism' (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009).

May our parish schools be supported by strong Parish School Advisory Committees where shared wisdom is achieved through prayer, collaboration, dialogue, transparency and stewardship. May Our Lady of Perpetual Help always guide our Parish School Advisory Committees to help them fulfil their task of ensuring our parish schools are places of encounter with Jesus Christ where the whole person is developed in a centre of educational excellence.

## 2. Statement of Faith

Our schools are communities of faith, learning and transformation founded upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, where the gospel is proclaimed and lived within the communion and the rich Tradition of the Catholic Church.

## 3. Mission and Values

Each Catholic School in the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese is inspired by an intimate relationship with God and is founded on a Christian view of the human person. Animated by a Spirit of communion and community and imbued with a Catholic worldview through the curriculum, each school is sustained by witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of our schools defends the inalienable dignity of the human person and maintains the active and visible promotion of human rights, social justice and peace.

## 4. Purpose

Parish School Advisory Committees are an important expression of the educational partnership that exists between parents, schools, parishes and the wider community to support the **faith development, learning** and **well-being** of all students. We know educational leadership is most effective when it is shared among teachers, parents and students and is focused on learning, quality teaching and building a collaborative community. We also know that when schools and families collaborate around student learning and well-being, students achieve better outcomes, attend school more regularly and remain at school longer. Collaborative school communities are stronger communities because they build on local resources and foster social capital. Parish School Advisory Committees aim to increase the participation and engagement of the school community in young people's education and as a consequence build collective responsibility for the faith formation, learning and well-being of all young people.

## 5. People

Catholic education is a lifelong process of human growth and development. It is more than schooling. It begins in the home, continues in the school and matures through involvement with the Christian community in the parish. Consequently, only in the partnership (understood as a

‘communion’) between home, school and the local Church, can authentic Catholic schools develop and grow.

**Partnership refers to:**

Collaborative relationships, based on mutual trust, respect and shared responsibility, involving all members of the Catholic school community which aim to foster and enrich the spiritual formation, learning and well-being of the children and young people at the school.

## 6. Principles

Supporting the Catholic identity and mission of the school is the most important responsibility of the Parish School Advisory Committee. Working in conjunction with the Principal and the Parish Priest/Administrator, the Committee has a role to play in seeing that the school is not only faithful to its mission as a Catholic school but also flourishes in that role.

The following principles underpin the work of the Parish School Advisory Committee in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes:

- **the Love of Christ**, which is the fundamental recognition that Catholic education is animated by and based upon the love of Christ for all people;
- **faithfulness to the mission of the Church**, which is the mission of Christ, to preach the Good News, including fidelity to the teachings of the Church;
- **the role of parents**, as the primary educators of their children, in whose place (“in loco parentis”) and with whose collaboration, Catholic schools fulfil their mission;
- **unity in diversity**, which is the recognition that the Holy Spirit inspires different communities in different ways, bestowing upon them diverse charisms which provide inspiration for action, all for the same purpose of promoting the Kingdom;
- **support for the common good**, which is the general obligation on members of the Church not only to support the Church, its agencies and members, but also to ensure that the work of the Church and its agencies contribute to the benefit of society as a whole;
- **embracing the poor**, which is the obligation on the Church community to continually assess its actions and policies to ensure that they empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised;
- **educational quality**, which is the obligation upon all those involved in Catholic education to strive to provide the highest possible quality of education to those attending Catholic schools;
- **inclusiveness**, which is the principle that Catholic education should be open to all those who wish to receive a Catholic education, and that all those engaged in Catholic education in whatever capacity will be welcomed and valued in the pursuit of the educational mission of the Church, to the extent that they support that mission; and

- **rule of Canon Law**, whereby every agency of the Church is constituted and operates in accordance with Canon Law.

## 7. Practices

Everyone in the Catholic school community - teachers, students and families - is responsible for achieving the educational aims of the school, each with something essential and unique to offer and always in the Gospel spirit of respect and love.

A school that reflects this spirit of co-responsibility and partnership continually asks the question: ***What is it that we can achieve together that we cannot achieve as individuals?*** The Parish School Advisory Committee is an expression of the belief that we are better together.

An effective Parish School Advisory Committee fosters and supports a community culture of **Engagement, Learning, Knowledge** and **Responsiveness** always underpinned by our Catholic identity and mission. The following practices guide committee members in their work:

- **Catholic**  
Faithful to the mission of Catholic Education and the Church with prayer at the beginning and closing each meeting;
- **Engaging**  
Engages in learning and wellbeing conversations and partnerships;
- **Learning**  
Focuses on building a learning community;
- **Knowing**  
Knows how to know their communities;
- **Responding**  
Responds in meaningful ways;

## 8. Procedures

### Limitations

Diocesan systemic schools are not legal entities in their own right. Therefore parent bodies which are part of the school cannot take on a legal identity of their own. The Parish School Advisory Committee is not to be separately incorporated and is not to be registered with an external regulatory body. The Parish School Advisory Committee works in collaboration with the Principal and Parish Priest.

The Parish School Advisory Committee :

- respects the role of the Parish Priest. It shall seek consent for activities/decisions involving school/parish property and its use;

- respects the authority and responsibility of the Principal in making decisions relating to the school and/or any activity using the school's name. It has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the school.
- acknowledges the need for any matter affecting an individual person, student, parent or staff member to be directed immediately and without discussion to the Principal;
- understands that it or members of its executive should not be seen as either a "spokesperson" for either the school or parents;
- operates in accordance with the principles, practices and procedures articulated in this document, and in particular within the Code of Conduct as outlined;
- operates according to the meeting protocols outlined where the agenda to be covered is set by the Parish Priest/Principal prior to the meeting.

## **Membership**

The Parish Priest/Administrator appoints members to the Parish School Advisory Committee, comprising:

- Parish Priest/Administrator (President);
  - School Principal (ex-officio);
  - A representative from the school staff; and
  - Two – four parent/carer representatives (note P&F Association may be represented in this group).
- When vacancies occur, parent/carers are invited to express their interest in joining the Parish School Advisory Committee.
  - Expressions of interest are advertised in the school newsletter.
  - Staff and parent/carer representatives are appointed by the Parish Priest/Administrator in consultation with the Principal. While parents and carers other than Catholic may be appointed, it is preferable that appointed members are practising Catholics and support the ethos of Catholic schools.
  - The Parish School Advisory Committee operates on the guiding principles of fairness, transparency, impartiality and co-responsibility.
  - The Parish School Advisory Committee meets within the confines of normal meeting procedures.
  - Each member shall be appointed for a period of two years with a maximum of two consecutive appointments. A member must have a one year break before returning to the committee after completing two consecutive appointments.
  - A member may resign at any time.
  - A letter of gratitude from the Parish Priest/Administrator and Principal shall be sent to outgoing Parish School Advisory Committee members at the conclusion of their

appointment.

- A Chairperson and Secretary shall be nominated and appointed (at the first meeting of the year).
  - **Role of Chairperson** - The Chairperson is responsible for leading the meeting based on the agenda set by the Principal and Parish Priest/Administrator. When discussion is underway, it is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that it continues to flow smoothly. The Chairperson should pace the meeting, ensuring it runs to time. If the planning has been properly executed, this should not prove to be a problem. At the end of a meeting, the Chairperson should remind members what they have achieved and thank them for their contributions.
  - **Role of Secretary** - The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes during the meeting and then sharing these minutes with the Principal for distribution to the Parish School Advisory Committee. During the meeting the Secretary should utilise the minute template as provided and based on the agenda set by the Principal and Parish Priest/Administrator.
  - **The Role of all Parish School Advisory Committee Members**  
While it is the role of the Chairperson to run the meeting, the participation of all members is also fundamental to the success of the meeting. To ensure an effective meeting, all participants should:
    - undertake any necessary preparation prior to the meeting;
    - keep an open mind;
    - listen to the opinions of others;
    - offer differing points of view respectfully;
    - ask questions to clarify understanding;
    - maintain confidentiality on relevant matters as identified;
    - note down any action agreed upon; and
    - after the meeting, undertake any agreed action and brief others as appropriate.

## Meetings

- Parish School Advisory Committees shall meet once per school term.
- Extra-ordinary meetings may be called by the Parish Priest/Administrator in consultation with the Principal. All meetings must have notice of at least two weeks given to the members.
- Meetings are normally on school premises and held at a time convenient to the members.
- A quorum will be a simple majority of the Parish School Advisory Committee and must include the Parish Priest/Administrator and the Principal.

## Reports

- **The Principal** gives a brief account of relevant activities within the school since the last meeting. If the Principal has any matters he or she wishes to raise for discussion, these are best listed in General Business. The Principal provides a summary of the current financial position presenting a Balance Sheet report. The Principal notes any significant budget variances for transparency to the committee. Sensitive material (financial documents) tabled at the Parish School Advisory Committee will be confidential and will be collected at the conclusion of the meeting.
- **The Parish Priest/Administrator** gives an account of parish activities that have relevance to the school community. This may be an opportunity to share ideas with the parent community on issues such as parent/family evangelisation, attracting families to the life of the parish, the planning of liturgies and classroom visits.
- **The P&F Representative** reports to the committee meeting a summary of current P&F activities and fundraising projects.

## 9. Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is intended to provide guidelines for the effective conduct of meetings and the development of positive relationships within the school community.

The Code of Conduct is discussed at the first meeting of the year. Attendees will read the Code of Conduct and sign the associated register (Appendix A). Reference to the Code of Conduct will be a standing item on the meeting agenda with new members required to read the Code of Conduct and sign the register.

### Conduct at Meetings

To ensure that meetings are carried out effectively, committee members agree to:

- conduct activities in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures for Parish School Advisory Committees;
- participate in meetings and other school community activities in a constructive manner and respect the views of others;
- adhere to the processes available to have issues addressed;
- support the executive, Principal and Parish Priest in the effective operation of the Committee;
- use appropriate conduct when participating in meeting discussions and promote positive personal relationships among members; and
- direct immediately and without discussion to the Principal any matter affecting an individual person, student, parent or staff member.

### **Conduct Unbecoming**

If a member is in breach of this code, the Chairperson will meet with the Principal and Parish Priest to decide appropriate action. The Principal and Parish Priest's decision will be final and binding on committee members.

### **Termination of Office**

A member of the Committee may be removed from office due to a breach of the Code of Conduct by resolution of the Parish Priest and Principal.

## **10. Dissolution**

The Parish School Advisory Committee will be dissolved if the school closes or is amalgamated.

In certain serious circumstances, where it is judged that the functions of the Parish School Advisory Committee are at variance with the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education Wilcannia-Forbes, the Committee may be dissolved. Dissolution of a committee should involve consultation between the Parish Priest, Principal, Bishop, Episcopal Vicar of Education and the Director of Catholic Education.

## **11. Amendment of the Guidelines**

The Guidelines shall not be amended or added to except with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes and the Director of Catholic Education, Wilcannia-Forbes.

## **12. Recommended Meeting Order: Parish School Advisory Committee**

### **Simple Agenda**

1. Opening Prayer and Acknowledgement of Country (note time and apologies).
2. Guest Speaker (suspend order of meeting to include).
3. Minutes of the previous meeting (note amendments then accept and Principal sign).
4. Business Arising from last meeting (minor matters only).
5. Correspondence (table all correspondence).
6. Reports (summarise discussion/questions/action/motions).
7. General Business (number items for referral at next meeting).
8. Meeting Closed (note time).

### **Opening**

The Chairperson declares the meeting open, welcomes members and leads the group in prayer. It



is important to commence the meeting at the advertised starting time. The Chairperson calls for any apologies that are to be noted or may ask members to write the name of those who have sent their apology in the Attendance Book.

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes need to be formally accepted by the meeting. This can be done in one of the following ways:

1. The secretary may read the Minutes aloud to the meeting, or
2. If the Minutes have been circulated beforehand, the Chairperson may ask that someone move that the minutes be taken as read, then calls for a seconder and a vote.

*Note: If an error exists in the Minutes it must now be brought to the attention of the meeting. The Chairperson makes the correction and initials it on the original copy.*

**Only after all corrections are made** the Chairperson then asks “Would someone move that these minutes be accepted as a true record of the last meeting? Would someone second this? Those in favour? Those against? Motion carried. Thank you.” (Mover and seconder must have been present at that meeting.)

### **Business Arising**

**After the Minutes have been accepted** the Chairperson then allows for any Business Arising from the Minutes to be brought before the meeting. Any minor matters are dealt with here but those requiring further discussion are best held over to General Business. This process is at the discretion of the Chairperson who states that the matter be held over for discussion in General Business and gives his/her reason for this decision.

### **Correspondence**

All relevant correspondence should be directed to the Parish Priest/Administrator and Principal prior to the meeting. All correspondence should be determined by the Parish Priest/Administrator and Principal prior to the meeting and included within the meeting agenda. Correspondence is divided into Inward and Outward.

#### **Inward Correspondence**

The Secretary may read aloud all letters received since the last meeting or to save time may simply list the correspondence and give a brief summary of content. Those letters which require some attention are best listed for discussion in General Business. Once all inward correspondence has been presented the Chairperson asks “Would someone move that all inward correspondence be received? Would someone second this? All those in favour? Against? Thank you.”

#### **Outward Correspondence**

The secretary may read aloud all letters sent since the last meeting or to save time may simply list who the letters have been sent to and give a brief summary of content. Once all outward correspondence has been presented, the Chairperson asks “Would someone move that all inward correspondence be received? Would someone second this? All those in favour? Against? Thank you.”

## **Reports**

The Chairperson calls for reports. These may include:

- **The Principal** who may give a brief account of relevant activities within the school since the last meeting. If the Principal has any matters he or she wishes to raise for discussion, these are best listed in General Business. The Principal provides a summary of the current financial position presenting a Balance Sheet report. The Principal notes any significant budget variances for transparency to the committee. Sensitive material (financial documents) will be collected at the conclusion of the meeting.
- **The Parish Priest/Administrator** who may give an account of parish activities or any issues that are of interest to the parents and school community.
- **The P&F Representative** who reports back to the meeting a summary of their current activities and fundraising projects.

## **General Business**

This section of the meeting is reserved for business that is carried over from the previous meeting, notices of motion, items listed on the agenda or held over from previous sections of the meeting so that adequate discussion may take place and new ideas/motions heard from members present at the meeting. It is important that adjourned business from previous meetings and notices of motion are dealt with first. After all matters listed on the agenda have been attended to, the Chairperson asks the meeting if there are any further matters which members wish to discuss or to give notice of for the next meeting. It is more appropriate that the Principal be given notice of questions requiring detailed answers or relating to controversial issues. These questions are then held over to the next meeting.

## **Closing**

If the meeting is running over time, the Chairperson needs to seek the consent of the meeting to either hold matters over until the next meeting or continue this meeting. After all business has been dealt with the Chairperson states the date of the next meeting and declares the meeting closed.

## Agenda

- Agenda items are set by the Principal in consultation with the Parish Priest/Administrator. Members of the Parish School Advisory Committee may request items be brought to the agenda. The agenda will be communicated with members in good time prior to the meeting.
- The Chairperson will conduct the meeting according to the agenda.

### Progressive (Rolling) Agenda

The purpose of a meeting agenda is to facilitate the business of a meeting by providing a clear and concise list of the items to be dealt with at a meeting and assisting with the organisation of any papers. A [progressive or rolling agenda](#), however, is designed to provide a forecast of agenda items over a period of time, for example a calendar year. They are complementary meeting tools.

A rolling agenda provides all school committee members with an opportunity to contribute to the setting of the agenda over the longer term. A rolling agenda also ensures that there is a structured approach to the consideration of important or strategic issues and that recurring issues are evenly spread across the meeting cycle.

### A progressive (rolling) agenda is useful in order to:

- better align each meeting agenda with key events/priorities in the life-cycle of the school and broader educational environment in a relevant and timely way;
- help the committee act in a more strategic and planned way;
- seek committee members' suggestions for items that can help deliver the objectives of the school committee plan; and
- assist members prepare for meetings ahead of time.

The rolling agenda should become a standing item on the ordinary meeting agenda to allow members greater opportunity to input to both development of the forward plan and to the development of individual agenda items.

### Allocating Time Within an Agenda



Up to 10% of the meeting time should be spent on attending to the previous meeting (minutes and business arising), financials if appropriate.

Up to 40% of the meeting should be spent on discussing and understanding what is currently happening in the school, looking at the school improvement plan.

Up to 50% of the meeting should be spent on looking towards the future, planning, responding to current information.

## 13. Agenda Focus Area Suggestions - Long Term

Preliminary Business - 10%	Current Business - 40%	Future Business - 50%
Prayer Acknowledgement of Country Minutes	Reports Current School and Parish Events  Suggested Current Business  Policy Review - seeking parent voice eg. Parent Handbook, Behaviour Management, Communication, Assessment and Reporting (policies directly supported by parent voice)  School Events and Promotion	Unpacking the Better Together Framework and Principles  Exploring Parent Engagement with the School Community  Exploring Community Partnerships  Parent Voice informing Annual School Improvement Plan

## 14. Support Documentation

[Progressive Rolling Agenda Template](#)

[Meeting Agenda Sample](#)

[Making Time for Conversations that Matter](#)

[Unpacking the Better Together Framework](#)

## 15. Reference

<https://www.btadvisorybodies.catholic.edu.au>

Date of Implementation	1 April 2019
Date of Last Review	4 November 2020
Date for Next Review	1 April 2021



## Code of Conduct for Parish School Advisory Committees

This Code of Conduct provides Committee members with Guidelines for the effective conduct of meetings and the development of positive relationships within the school community.

### Conduct at Meetings

As a Parish School Advisory Committee member I agree to:

- conduct activities in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures for Parish School Advisory Committees;
- participate in meetings and school community activities in a constructive manner and respect the views of others;
- adhere to the processes available to have issues addressed;
- support the Executive, Principal and Parish Priest in the effective operation of the Committee;
- use appropriate conduct when participating in meeting discussions and promote positive personal relationships among Committee members; and
- direct immediately and without discussion to the Principal any matter affecting an individual person, student, parent or staff member

### Conduct Unbecoming

If any Committee member is in breach of this code, the Chairperson will meet with the Principal and Parish Priest to decide appropriate action. The Principal and Parish Priest's decision will be final and binding on committee members.

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[Name of Committee Member]

[Signature]

[ Date]